

NOTE: The deadline for submission of the Request for Proposals for the Region 4 **Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)/Strategic Agriculture Initiative Grant Program: FY 2005** has been changed to **OCTOBER 31, 2005**.

Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grant Program: FY2005 Request for Proposals

OVERVIEW INFORMATION:

- 1. Federal Agency Name:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, Air Pesticides and Toxics Management Division, Pesticides Section, Strategic Agricultural Initiative.
- 2. Funding Opportunity Title:** Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA)/Strategic Agriculture Initiative Grant Program: FY2005 Request for Proposals.
- 3. Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement for Fiscal Year 2005.
- 4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 66.716, Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations, Educational Outreach, and Special Projects within the Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances.
- 5. Statutory Authority:** Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20, 7 U.S.C. §136r.
- 6. Date:** Proposals must be postmarked on or before **September 19, 2005**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

EPA Region 4 is soliciting proposals to help implement the FQPA and to support efforts by the agricultural community to transition to using less pesticides and lower risk pesticides in food production. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration, and implementation projects for FQPA transition and reduced-risk practices for pest management in agriculture.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Authority

EPA expects to award grants under the authority provided in FIFRA Section 20 which authorizes the Agency to issue grants or cooperative agreements for research, public education, training, monitoring, demonstration and studies. Regulations governing these cooperative agreements are found at 40 CFR Part 30 for institutions of higher education, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations; and 40 CFR Part 31 for States and local governments. In addition, the provisions in 40 CFR Part 32 governing government wide debarment and suspension and the provisions in 40 CFR Part 34 regarding restrictions on lobbying apply. All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circulars: A-87 (states and local governments), A-122 (nonprofit organizations), or A-21 (universities). Copies of these circulars can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>. In accordance with EPA policy and the OMB circulars, as appropriate, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for lobbying, fund-raising, or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other Federal grants, cooperative agreements or contracts). See 40 CFR Part 34.

B. Program Description

1. *Purpose and Scope* - The purpose of the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) Grant Program is to help implement FQPA and support transition efforts by growers to more environmentally-sound pest management practices. The program supports grants for education, extension, demonstration and implementation projects for FQPA transition and reduced-risk practices for pest management in agriculture. Priority is placed on project proposals that include a “whole systems” approach by integrating pest, soil, and crop management practices, addressing an array of commodities, focusing on sustainable agriculture, incorporating conservation planning, and are submitted by applicants that have a proven track record of grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices. Successful applicants will also have an outreach and extension component to their program. “Sustainable” agriculture refers to farming practices that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible.

2. *Goals and Objectives* - The goals of the FQPA SAI Grant Program are:

- Utilize demonstration projects, outreach, and/or education to increase the adoption of reduced-risk integrated pest management (IPM) programs and/or practices that provide alternatives to pest management practices that include the use of highly toxic pesticides and/or pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions.
- Encourage partnerships between producers, commodity groups, scientists, extension, local, state or federal government agencies, and other stakeholders to demonstrate, promote, and utilize reduced-risk and/or IPM practices in the field.
- Actively engage scientists, producers, industry, and local, state or federal partners in the specifics of implementing FQPA.
- Measure and document the effects of using the reduced-risk/IPM programs on the environment, human health and community.
- Facilitate a sustainable whole farm systems approach that utilizes conservation planning and reduced-risk/IPM practices.
- Demonstrate region-specific pest management practices and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses which may be cancelled under FQPA.

C. Background

The FQPA, passed by Congress in 1996, establishes health-based standards for pesticide residues in raw and processed food. It is intended to protect public health from exposure to pesticides and to create an environment favorable for the development and adoption of

lower risk, effective crop protection tools for U.S. agriculture. The EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and numerous agricultural organizations are working on efforts to

implement the FQPA. For this effort, EPA established regional programs for FQPA implementation and partnership activities to reduce risks and use of pesticides in agriculture. For more background information on FQPA, visit the EPA website at www.epa.gov/oppfead1/fqpa/.

D. FQPA/SAI Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. *Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan/GPRA Architecture.* These assistance agreements will support EPA Strategic Plan Goal 4 - Healthy Communities and Ecosystems; Objective 4.1 - Chemical, Organism and Pesticide Risk; and Program/Project 92 - Field Programs.
2. *Outcomes.* Through this grant program, EPA expects to: (a) increase the number of growers using reduced-risk and/or IPM tools and techniques; (b) measure quantitative and qualitative benefits to human health, the environment, and communities; and (c) support partnerships between crop producers, EPA, other federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested stakeholders to implement reduced-risk/IPM programs and to leverage funds from other sources to increase the scope of the FQPA SAI program.
3. *Outputs.* The anticipated outputs of these projects include: (a) educational and outreach materials for growers; (b) conservation plans for growers that include reduced- risk pest management; (c) conferences, seminars, and on-site field training; and (d) partnerships established between federal and non-federal programs to provide reduced- risk and/or IPM programs for crop producers.

II. Award Information

A. Amount of Funding Available

The EPA Region 4 SAI anticipates having approximately **\$288,000** in 2005 to award eligible applicants. Projects up to **\$100,000** will be considered for funding. Indirect cost rates will not increase the \$100,000 maximum funding amount. Costs incurred by the applicant prior to the receipt of a written offer of a grant award from EPA are incurred at the applicant's risk. If for any reason EPA does not fund your grant application or does not approve the pre-award costs, EPA is under no obligation to reimburse applicants for these costs. Should additional funding become available for award, the Agency may award additional grants up to 4 months from the date of original selection(s) based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice of competition.

B. Funding Type

The funding for selected projects is in the form of a grant awarded under FIFRA, Section 20, 7 U.S.C. § 136r.

C. Total Number of Awards

The number of awards will depend on individual proposal costs and the total final amount of Federal funding available. Current SAI grantees may submit proposals for a new grant but not for an increase in existing awards which would be outside the scope of this announcement.

D. Start Date/Project Duration

Award funds for the selected proposals will be available in November 2005; however, **grantees should expect to begin projects in early spring of 2006**, to allow sufficient time for completion of required paperwork and transfer of funds. Funding may be used for **up to two years** from the time grants are awarded.

E. Disclaimer

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Assistance under this program is generally available to any State, U.S. territories or possession, federally recognized Indian Tribal governments, and Native American Organizations, public and private universities, hospitals, laboratories, commodity organizations, farmers groups, other public or private non-profit institutions and individuals. (Caution: Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.) For-profit organizations are not eligible; however, ineligible groups are encouraged to work with an eligible organization to submit proposals. Implementation of all projects must occur within one or more of the eight states of EPA Region 4: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

B. Matching/Cost Share Requirements

Matching funds are not required; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to build partnerships and maximize the benefits of EPA funding. Applicants who provide evidence of partnering will receive additional points in Section V under selection criteria number 9.

C. Threshold Criteria

Proposals must address one or more of the *Goals and Objectives* of the FQPA SAI program listed above in Section I.B.2. of this announcement. Proposals must comply with all format and content requirements and directions for submittal contained in this notice. Proposals which do not meet these threshold criteria will be disqualified. In addition, since the FQPA The SAI grant program is intended to support implementation projects, proposals should not include activities that involve basic research. Proposals **may include** a *component for applied*

on-farm research, as long as they also have *demonstration, education and/or outreach* activities.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Content and Format of Proposal

All proposals must be no more than 12 pages as described below. **Applicant must submit one original paper copy and one electronic copy** (CD, 3.5" disk, or e-mail attachment).

All proposals should contain the following:

1. *Cover Page (Page 1)*. The cover page should list the following information:

Project Title:

Project Coordinator:

Organization Name and Address:

Telephone No.: Fax No.: Email Address:

Project Duration (including Starting Date and Ending Date):

First Year Funding Request:

Second Year Funding Request, if applicable:

Total Funding Request:

2. *Executive Summary (maximum two pages)*. The Executive Summary should be a stand alone document containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. The summary should contain the measurable environmental results you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits.

3. *Proposal Narrative and Workplan (maximum of five pages)*. You should include a well-conceived workplan that is realistic and appropriate to achieving the identified objectives. You should include a brief background on the main issues or challenges, specific objectives, main activities, and expected outcomes and deliverables. You should include the project area and a timeline.

4. *Performance Measures and Expected Outcomes*. The workplan must include performance measures that demonstrate the progress or environmental benefits of the project. Include specific milestones. How will you measure improvements to human health, the ecosystem, or quality of life? Pick two or three measures from the SAI Toolbox (<http://www.aftresearch.org/sai>) (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures).

In addition to performance measures listed in Section V (Proposal Review and Selection Criteria), all project proposals and reports (progress and final) must also include the following four **mandatory elements** for reporting of project measures:

- a. Number of acres likely to be impacted by the project.

b. Current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index (<http://www.aftresearch.org/sai>) (SAI Grant Applicants).

c. Percent reduction or pound-per-acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.

d. Evidence that applicant expects to partner with others and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with media releases or other outreach activities.

5. *Budget/Resources (maximum two pages)*. Please submit a detailed budget with your proposal, linking the cost of each objective with the budget. Include information on other funding sources (leveraged funds), if any. Describe how leveraged resources will be obtained and what role EPA funding will play in the overall project.

6. *Programmatic and Administrative Capability*. Applicants are required to submit information in the proposal that addresses their programmatic (technical) capability ranking factors outlined in Section V of this announcement. In conducting the programmatic capability evaluation, the Agency will consider the information submitted by the applicant as well as relevant information from other sources including Agency files. Include the qualifications and background of the main people or organizations involved as an attachment. Also include letters of support from growers or other partners and/or collaborators, specifying their contribution in project implementation.

B. Submission of Grant Proposals

Applicants must submit a hard copy of their proposal along with an electronic version in Word Perfect or MS Word on a 3.5" disk, CD, or as an attachment via e-mail. Send or deliver all proposals to:

Lora Lee Schroeder
Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator
APTMD, Pesticides Section
U.S. EPA Region 4
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960
ph: 404-562-9015

fax: 404-562-8973

e-mail address: schroeder.lora@epa.gov

All proposals must be postmarked on or before September 19, 2005.

C. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR § 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application and/or proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims

in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications and/or proposals or portions of applications and/or proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR § 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372 or Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

E. Dun and Bradstreet Number

Award recipients must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number on their formal SF 424 application form. A DUNS number can be obtained by calling 1-866-705-5711. **A DUNS number is not required until the full application is submitted.**

F. Funding Restrictions

Costs incurred by the applicant prior to the receipt of a written offer of a grant award from EPA are incurred at the applicant's risk. If for any reason EPA does not fund your grant application or does not approve the pre-award costs, EPA is under no obligation to reimburse applicants for these costs. Indirect cost rates will not increase the \$100,000 maximum funding amount.

Allowable Costs: EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87, A-122, and A-21, as appropriate.

V. Proposal Review and Selection Criteria

A. Proposal Review

All proposals will be initially reviewed according to the threshold criteria by the Region 4 SAI coordinator. Proposals meeting the threshold criteria will be further evaluated by a panel of EPA staff using the selection criteria listed below

B. Selection Criteria (Total 100 points)

1. *Program focuses on sustainable agriculture and uses conservation planning and a whole systems approach. (14 points)*

Applicants should describe their agriculture program, including the program's approach to addressing an array of commodities, along with applied research and extension program components, and methods for grower participation and adoption of sustainable pest management practices. Programs that encourage a "whole systems" approach to pest management, integrating pest, soil, crop, and water management practices are preferred.

2. *Importance of project in relation to FQPA. (10 points)*

Proposed projects should address critical pest management issues relative to FQPA and be consistent with the goals of the FQPA SAI. Projects must focus on actual results, getting information and agricultural practices into the hands of growers who actually use them to shift away from FQPA-targeted pesticides to other methods of pest management

3. *Commodity and region-wide significance and degree of transferability to other areas. (10 points)*

Submitted proposals should address one or more agricultural commodities. Applicants should discuss critical pest management issues, explaining the importance of the project and the commodity. Include how the agricultural practice and reduced-risk tools could be adapted to other locations with similar cropping systems.

4. *On-farm demonstration with active roles for multiple grower participation. (10 points)*

Proposals include partnerships and participation of growers as part of the project activities. Cooperation with scientists, extension officers, pest control advisors, other non-profit organizations, and other partners is encouraged. Letters of support from collaborators, indicating their contributions to the project, are included.

5. *Clearly stated and measurable objectives. (10 points)*

Proposals should clearly state and explain the project objectives. Discuss to what degree the project will: (a) reduce or eliminate the use of highly toxic pesticides; and (b) increase farmers' adoption of reduced-risk alternatives and/or sustainable integrated pest or crop management methods. Include a clear explanation of the methods (both qualitative and quantitative) that will be used to measure progress and impacts. Measures of success should be linked to reduction of pesticide use and/or risks, implementation of alternative agricultural practices, and/or similar impacts.

6. *Environmental Measurement/Outcomes (Medium and Long-term outcomes). (16 points)*

The project is likely to produce desirable outputs (ex: training materials, new IPM tools)

and outcomes (ex: change in awareness and implementation of IPM practices). A description of expected outcomes is included. There are two to three performance measures that can be tracked throughout the project. These measures can be “direct” or “surrogate” measures. Direct measures identify actual environmental changes occurring with IPM adoption. In contrast, surrogate measures identify changes in strategies or behavior that should lead to environmental changes. Special consideration will be given to those partnering with agencies or organizations already monitoring environmental quality in the project area.

To identify appropriate project performance measures, you may choose from the measures listed in the SAI Toolbox located at <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/> (SAI Grant Applicants, Performance Measures). If you choose to use unique performance measures other than those listed in the Toolbox, they must be clearly described and submitted as part of the proposal. If your project is selected for funding, measures included in your proposal may be subject to negotiation. You must describe the method you will use to attain data to support the measures indicated.

The proposal also includes (a) number of acres likely to be impacted by the project; (b) current level of pest management and the level that is expected to be achieved at the end of the project based on the SAI Transition Index <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/> (SAI Grant Applicants); and (c) percent reduction or pound per acre reduction expected in the use of highly toxic active ingredients and/or pesticide products.

7. *Outreach/use of extension to enhance the likelihood of grower adoption. (10 points)*

The proposal includes clear plans for extension, outreach or communication that will likely lead to effective learning and adoption of new practices, and how long-term, sustainable adoption will be measured.

8. *Qualifications and experience (10 points).*

Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant’s: (a) past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project; (b) history of meeting reporting requirements on prior or current assistance agreements with federal and/or non-federal organizations and submitting acceptable final technical reports; (c) organizational experience and ability to plan for timely and successful achievement of the objectives of the project; and (d) staff expertise and/or qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. You must include a list of personnel and key institutions and stakeholders involved with your project including commodity boards, state and federal agriculture, resource and regulatory agencies.

9. *Project maximizes benefits of EPA funding. (10 points)*

Applicant demonstrates how EPA funding will be coordinated with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds or other resources to accomplish project goals. The applicant

provides evidence of intent to partner with others and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with media releases or other outreach activities.

PLEASE NOTE: FQPA SAI funds are not intended to support basic research; however proposals may include a *component* for *applied on-farm research*, as long as they also have *demonstration, education and/or outreach* activities. Proposals that maximize the use of resources for “on-the-ground” activities will be viewed more favorably than those proposals with high administrative costs.

VI. Award Administration Process

A. Award Decisions and Formal Application Process

Decisions on the grants will be made by October 14, 2005, and applicants will be notified within the following week. If your proposal is selected for funding, you will need to complete a formal application for Federal funding. An application kit containing financial and administrative forms and general information on Federal grants will be mailed to award recipients. Blank application forms may also be obtained electronically at: <http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6md/grants.htm>. Required forms include an SF 424 and SF 424A Budget Sheet. EPA staff will be available for assistance in completing the forms. **The formal application will be due by Close of Business on November 18, 2005.**

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The award and administration of these grants will be governed by the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to states, tribes, and local governments set forth at 40 CFR Part 31. Grants awarded pursuant to this solicitation are subject to the regulations for “Environmental Program Grants” set forth at the 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. In addition, the provision in 40 CFR Part 32 governing government-wide debarment and suspension, and the provisions in 40 CFR Part 40 regarding restrictions on lobbying apply.

All costs incurred under this program must be allowable under the applicable OMB Cost Circular A-87. Copies of this circular can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>. In accordance with the EPA policy and the OMB circular, any recipient of funding must agree not to use assistance funds for fund-raising or political activities such as lobbying members of Congress or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts. See 40 CFR Part 40.

Nonprofit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement will be subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Sections 8.b, 8.c, and 9.d of EPA Order 5700.8, “EPA Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards.” Nonprofit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capability Form, with supporting documents, contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

C. Reporting

The selected grant recipients will be asked to complete at least one progress report after the grant is awarded, and a final report within 90 days following the end of the grant period. Progress reports should address the status of all of the objectives and activities in the proposal, environmental impacts measured/observed, and a statement of expenses. Quarterly Financial Status Reports will also be required.

D. Dispute Resolution Process

Grant competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1271.htm>.

Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Regional SAI contact, Lora Lee Schroeder, via e-mail at schroeder.lora@epa.gov or phone (404)562-9015.

VII. Agency Contacts

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative RFP, please contact:

Lora Lee Schroeder, EPA Region 4, Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator, phone: (404) 562-9015
e-mail: schroeder.lora@epa.gov